

Townsend (E)

VALEDICTORY

TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGERY,

DELIVERED IN THE

MUSICAL FUND HALL, FEBRUARY 28, 1854,

BY

ELISHA TOWNSEND, M. D., D. D. S.,

PROFESSOR OF OPERATIVE DENTAL SURGERY.



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PHILADELPHIA:

J. H. JONES, PRINTER, NO. 34 CARTER'S ALLEY.
1854.

PHILADELPHIA DENTAL COLLEGE, Feb. 20th, 1854.

To Professor E. Townsend, M. D.

DEAR SIR :—At a meeting of the Graduating Class, the undersigned were appointed a committee to request of you a copy of your “Valedictory Address” for publication. Your compliance with this request will greatly oblige the entire Class.

Yours, respectfully,

ISAIAH PRICE,
JOHN R. RUBENCAME, } Committee.
B. COHEN,

ST. MARK'S PLACE, 380 LOCUST STREET, Feb. 21, 1854.

GENTLEMEN :—I am honored in the receipt of your favor of yesterday, requesting a copy of my Valedictory for publication, in compliance with which I place the manuscript at your disposal. Very respectfully, yours,

ELISHA TOWNSEND.

TO DRs. ISAIAH PRICE,
JOHN R. RUBENCAME, } Committee.
B. COHEN,

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN:—The ceremonial of the evening formally admits you to the honors of the Doctorate in Dentistry. The term of your pupilage is closed; your diplomas certify your right legitimately to practice and teach your profession, and the duties and authority of the Faculty which has conferred your well-earned Degrees terminate with the act which places the pupil in the rank of technical equality with his teacher. In the name of the Faculty and of the Profession, I bid you welcome, and exchange with you the cordial embrace of professional fraternity

Suppressing the expression of those personal regrets that necessarily attend the severance of ties which have bound us together in our collegiate relations, as much because they do not admit of adequate utterance, as because they are compensated by the pleasures of those still higher and worthier, though less intimate connections, which are now established between us, allow me to address you these, our last lingering words, in the altered tone of the new functions and responsibilities which you this evening assume to the profession and to the world.

Of that second, self-education now to commence with you, I have little to say. The instructions already delivered from the several chairs upon which you have attended, must serve both for communicating what we had to teach and directing you in the method of what you still have to learn. Systematic education in Dentistry does not terminate in confessions and apologies for incapability to effect its intention. It does not frustrate its own design by cramming its graduates with a chaos of theories to the suffocation of the intellect. It does not crowd the science of half a dozen professions into the programme of a single novitiate. Nor does it so sever the discipline of practice from the study of principles as to leave the alumni of its schools in the helplessness of utter inexperience at the outset of their independent career. Fortunately for you, the change from the stage of preparatory study to that of responsible practice, under our method, is as nothing compared with the compound profession of Medicine and Surgery, into which the Degree of Doctor of Medicine plunges the untrained disciple of the general healing art. Having finished our professional

prelections and ascertained your proficiency by tests that are not mere abstractions, and cannot be illusory, we can, in the strictest justice of application, say to you, when we send you out to the warfare of life, "Walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing whereto you have already attained."

Our speciality in the healing art has such balance, adjustment and relation among its elements, and so happily illustrates and verifies its theory in its practice throughout the whole period of study, that we are not obliged to adopt the fashionable valedictory warning which announces to the terrified graduates that "they are now only indoctrinated in the facts and principles of their study, and cannot be said to have fairly commenced to learn their profession, until they have entered its practice." You, gentlemen, in your public study, as well as under your private preceptors, have been trained and instructed to a fair, practical proficiency in every department of the calling which your diplomas declare you competent to undertake. We need, therefore, at the moment of parting say to you nothing but go forward in the work of self-development. Whether in the conduct of your continued studies, or in the fulfilment of the varied duties before you, we have but one word to utter—persevere. As we have hitherto conducted you, so we for the future direct you. We know nothing before you that need surprise you. We know of nothing lying in wait for you that is not fully provided for in the teachings already imparted. We take leave to say, that we have not turned you out of our hands Doctors of Parchment—Dentists in expectancy, or peradventure, but we pronounce you Dentists now—worthy of the title, and ready for use. I do not say that the growth of manhood and old age does not lie out in long-drawn perspective before you, but I say that you have reached your professional majority in the qualifications of your art; in a word, that you are not so many collegiate grubs, waiting for your wings till they are grown by the tedious and painful metamorphosis of future experience. Your system of study, both in method and appliances, is an actual matter of fact anticipation of future practice; and, if any of you have the slough of the chrysalis yet to cast, it is either because you, or we, or both, have been delinquent in our duty; it is not an intrinsic fault in the policy of dental education. The method of study, the direction of principles, and the drill of practice, you will bear us witness, have run current with, and been incorporated in, all our teachings, in such inter-dependency that you are well assured to-day of the pathway that will lead you onward toward the attainment of your future aims, and guide you safely to their eventual achievement. Nothing

less than this would answer the promise and the trust implied in the contract entered into between us. You carry with you from these halls the certificate of the Faculty that you have well and honorably performed your part of the engagement, and, we trust you very confidently, to demonstrate to the world the fulfilment of the pledge upon our part. Yesterday, gentlemen, you were our pupils, but to day you take rank and fellowship with us in our common profession; and, laying aside the claims, with the duties and relations of preceptor and pupil, let us turn together for a moment to the consideration of some of those interests and responsibilities which have now become our mutual and equal concern as members of the profession.

Dentistry is usually spoken of as a branch of the great healing art, but, in point of fact, it has grown, not out of the stem, but up from the root of the tree of remedial science, and as it has not sprung from, so it does not depend upon the older trunk, but stands beside it, deriving its separate nutrition from the same soil indeed, yet by the independent energies of its own vitality. Hitherto, in fact, it has been indebted rather for shadow than sunshine to the elder-born growth. A thrifty sapling it has proved, with roots and branches of its own; distinct in its vital economy, though kindred in origin; distinct, also, in its fortunes, and necessarily so in the conditions and policy of its culture. Moreover, it has already so far matured, that it is full time for it to be set out by itself for larger room to grow and ripen its proper fruits.

Doctor of Dental Surgery is a comparatively new patent of nobility in the heraldry of science, and necessarily institutes the relations and duties of a new order in the diplomatic ranks. To this service we have pledged a generous devotion. We have enlisted in the regular army of advance, and the consciousness that its fortunes must be vitally affected by our conduct in the field, cannot fail to fire the zeal, and steady the fidelity due to the cause.

What does it ask at our hands; and how shall we best answer its great demands?

Very rapidly and successfully, yet still very recently, the profession has advanced from the sheer chaos of empiricism to the form and order of a regularly systematic art; so founded upon principles, and so justified by experience, as entitles it to the character of an integral science. It has also richly provided itself with the apparatus and method of future growth and progressive achievement. Already we are in possession of elementary treatises in every department of the study; we have an able periodical literature, and colleges for thorough and comprehensive education are springing up with a rapidity and a

capability almost equal to the demands of the times. We have so well advanced in the transition stage of our progress, if not quite passed it, that the elements of a permanent order are rapidly arraying themselves into the most efficient forms.

Our duties are determined by these favorable conditions, and our obligations proportionately enhanced by the resulting facility of their performance. The duties before us, it seems to me, may be best understood by dividing them into two concurrent, but distinct branches. The first and most direct is the improvement of the profession by all the aid which it is in our power to contribute; and the second, the equal obligation which lies upon us to repress and eradicate the remaining irregularity and unworthiness that still attaches to the fraternity.

The duties under the first division, which I have placed first, because they lie nearest home, and are first in rank and importance to the objects aimed at, fall for the most part within the regular range of that self-culture and self-improvement, which concern our individual interests most narrowly considered.

Whatever we can do to render our art most helpful to our patients will best serve to enhance the character of the profession, and to raise the standard of its public estimation. In the proportion that we illustrate its dignity and demonstrate its utility in our own practice and conduct, we will have advanced the requirements that the public will make upon all who, in our own neighborhood, make claims to proficiency in our science. To the extent that we shall be able to indicate a clear superiority, we will have established a reforming criticism over the pretensions, and a corrective influence over the practice, of inferior men. The legitimate, the best mode of exposing the darkness around you is, by the brightness of the light you shed into it, and the happy advantage of this method is, that while it exposes, it also dispels it. But beside this, and a little beyond it, there is the duty we owe to the profession at large, of contributing, by word and deed, by care and service, to the efficiency and success of all the means that are unavailable, especially all those that are already provided, for the liberal education of the men who are hereafter to fill our places. The responsibilities resting upon you in this behalf embrace several very important particulars. I can only glance at them now, and commend them to the fuller consideration which they deserve from you. The private education of pupils in dentistry is a high and responsible trust necessarily incident to the doctorate of the profession. Upon every capable practitioner in the country, this duty rests with imposing force; but you, by all your commitments, are especially pledged to its

worthiest performance. Collegiate faculties are not the only, nor even the most important agents in this function. Doctor of Dentistry literally means teacher of the art, and you use, in your private capacities, the primary, and by no means the least important functionaries of the educational faculty.

You are aware that the college whose honors you have won, insists upon an adequate private preceptorship as a condition of graduation. Its importance to the individual you understand too well to need any enforcement from me; but I cannot let this opportunity pass without pressing upon you the expectation that you will, in this matter, fully second and zealously forward the general effort to elevate the standard of regular study, and generously devote yourselves to the discharge of your own share of this honorable service. In your own judgment, there is no question of the indispensable necessity of a thorough preliminary study in the principles of the profession. There results from this conviction, therefore, the corresponding duty of indoctrinating all those within your influence, who propose to enter the profession with the soundest views of its requirements, and of providing for your own pupils all the facilities, and devoting to them all the care, that are necessary to the fullest acquirements.

Your offices and work-rooms, your libraries of elementary books, and your supply of our periodical publications should be provided with liberal completeness, and your personal instructions must be most fully and conscientiously afforded.

The applicant depends upon your judgment for the knowledge of his proper qualifications. Be faithful to him and to the profession in this. See that he has the mind, and the general education that qualifies him for the study. See that habits of study, as well as application to practical operations, are justly regarded. Let the idea that the profession is a learned and a liberal one rule the conduct of the pupil, and your conduct toward him. Keep steadily before him the connection of all the departments of physical and remedial science which our own involves and depends upon, for its completeness and for its further progress.

Allow me to say to you in the most emphatic manner, that we look to you for the best services which you can render to the cause of preparatory education, with a solicitude and a confidence second to none that we have in any of the agencies in existence for the reformation and development of our noble profession; and, we charge you, by every consideration of duty, honor, and ambition, that you fail us not in this grand hope of our enterprise.

The preceptor engaged in the onerous duties of his practice is under great temptations of convenience and of interest to slight his duty to his pupils; nay, it is only at considerable sacrifice that he can fully perform it. But this, for its importance to the common interests of the Faculty and of the community, is exactly the service that is exacted from him. Perform it in the spirit of your calling; perform it in the fulfilment of your public pledge, effectually, religiously, and your reward will be the consciousness that you have well deserved the rank you have assumed in a liberal fraternity; neglect it, and the reproach of delinquency to the highest trust will outweigh all the pleasure and pride of the largest selfish successes.

The standard and periodical publications, devoted to our art, have unquestionable claims upon your support. Every dentist, worthy of the name, should consider himself an agent for their circulation, and a contributor, by implied contract, to their stores of information. Every liberal profession, as much as that of religion, has, besides its sanctity to be guarded, its interests and usefulness to be promoted. The lawyer, the physician, the naturalist, the dentist, is a sort of priest of his order, and owes to it the required fidelity, sacrifice and service. The philosophers of Greece exacted a sacramental vow from the disciples whom they initiated into the mysteries of their Schools. Hippocrates administered an oath to the adepts of the healing art. I will read it to you, both for the curiosity and the instructive suggestions it contains:

“I swear by Apollo, the Physician, by Æsculapius, by Hygiea, by Panacea, and all the gods and goddesses, calling them to witness, that I will fulfil religiously, according to the best of my power and judgment, the solemn promise, and the written bond which I now do make: I will honor as my parents the master who has taught me this art, and endeavor to minister to all his necessities: I will consider his children as my brothers, and will teach them my profession, should they express a desire to follow it, without remuneration or written bond. I will admit to my lessons, my discourses, and all my other methods of teaching, my own sons, and those of my tutors, and those who have been inscribed as pupils and have taken the medical oath, and *no one* else. I will prescribe such a course of medicine as may be best suited to the constitution of my patients, according to the best of my power and judgment, seeking to preserve them from anything that might prove injurious. No inducement shall ever lead me to administer poison, nor will I be the author of such advice. I will maintain religiously the purity and integrity, both of my conduct and my art. Into what-

ever dwellings I may go, I will enter them with the sole view of succouring the sick. If, during my attendance, or even unprofessionally in common life, I happen to hear of any circumstances which should not be revealed, I will consider them a profound secret, and observe on the subject a religious silence. May I, if I religiously observe this my oath, and do not break it, enjoy good success in life, and in the practice of my art, and obtain general esteem forever. Should I transgress and become a perjurer, may the reverse be my lot."

Now, whatever the altered circumstances of the times have made obsolete and inapplicable in this grand summary of professional obligations, the principles which it recognizes are of perpetual obligation. None of them could be better presented, and some of them I might not have chosen to express; but there is a parity of conditions which will not fail to warrant their application to ourselves, our relation to each other, to our calling, to our patients and to the public. But especially are the sanctity and the devotedness of the order to which these principles of conduct, and these sentiments of fraternity apply, as well in our cases as in any other, well worthy of acceptance and observance. Our young profession demands of us equal ardor of service, and equal jealousy of defence, as medicine did in the distant age of its early infancy: above all things, it needs the spirit and corporate enthusiasm, and priestly purity, and sacredness of dedication that correspond to its divine origin and beneficent aims. The idea that I would enforce here must be obvious enough, and sufficiently warranted by its practical results, but I am tempted to strike the thought still deeper to the grand principle upon which it rests.

History testifies that every upward movement among men has been effected through the spirit of corporate association.

The orders of nobility, knighthood, priesthood, medicine, law, fellowships in liberal learning, and the less formal, but equivalent etiquette of rank in social life, teach, unmistakably, that the policy of distinctive degrees is inseparable from culture and progress. That labor, which, in itself, is as honorable as any other, but is still degraded, dependent and oppressed, is so, simply because it lacks the organization and the protective sacredness of fraternity and corporate enthusiasm. Every function by which the world's interests are served, is equally honorable intrinsically, but none become free, efficient and honored, till its members recognize their unity, interchange its sympathies, support its common interests, and defend its distinctive rights and honors. I do not need to say to you that I recommend no selfish conspiracy, no superci-

lious exclusiveness of caste, with a monopoly of honors and emoluments for its aims, and invidious means for their attainment.

It is not the maintenance of a party, but the promotion of progress, that is intended as the object of your ambition ; and only such measures, offensive and defensive, as comport with the most generous public ends, and are compelled by liberal and enlightened policy. Such conduct, in a word, in every thing as makes a prudent man better and wiser by the observance, and operates by replacing abuses with general benefits. These motives will direct us also most wisely and worthily in our dealings with the empiricism or quackery which still deforms the profession, and with the public opinions and prejudices which sustain it. I do not like the word empiric, and would be very cautious in its application. Literally, the word signifies no more than one who makes experiments ; by custom it is applied to one who enters the medical profession without a systematic education, and relies solely upon the teachings of his own experience. The censure which the term is intended to convey, is certainly not deserved by a practitioner of our art, who in defect of all opportunity for regular and best methods of professional study has depended upon his own industry and talent for such qualification as he could thereby attain to. We stand too near the time when dentists must have been self-made, or not made at all ; and we have too many examples among us of honorable and enviable distinction thus acquired, to be rash in applying the reproach which a better order of things now leaves without excuse. The honorary degress conferred by our young Dental Colleges upon a large number of gentlemen in the profession, has been induced by a sentiment of simple justice, strengthened, also, by a due modesty in the doctorate itself, which could not bear its own titular honors easily in contrast with equally deserving men who could not formally, but have equitably, earned them. In these circumstances, therefore, gentlemen, it is not your parchments simply, but your attainments that should be your pride, and this apprehension will dictate the consideration and delicacy due to the deserving. An empiric may, nevertheless, be a proficient in his art, and a graduate with all the honors may, also, be a mere sciolist.

A man is to be measured by his merits, notwithstanding that a diploma is *prima facie* evidence, and a worthy distinction, of character and standing. Still it is your duty to repress and discredit unfounded pretension by all the means fairly and effectually in your power. This, in general, will be best accomplished by fully and decidedly answering to every claim of the accomplished and regular professors of our art,

and by as decidedly refusing to admit those of the unworthy and incapable. A great advantage—an indispensable one—of the corporate organization which we have already urged is, that its honorable reciprocities withheld may act as distinctions and penalties upon groundless pretension. Just as the disciples of Hippocrates were sworn to admit to the fraternity, “those who had been inscribed as pupils, had taken the medical oath and no one else;” so we are bound to refuse fraternity to the irregulars, who repudiate the essential obligations of the profession, and discredit its name. We do not expect, and I do not think we desire quack laws of the legislature to repress abuses, but we require quack tests established by ourselves, and well received by the community, by which they may be speedily and certainly extirpated. This is our proper duty, we must address ourselves to it, and the means within our command are, in general terms, the improvement of the system of private tutorship, the active support of the collegiate system, now fast rising into confidence among us; the liberal encouragement of our periodical publications, the organization of efficient dental associations among practitioners for their mutual improvement and protection, in every district where such parliaments of progress are practicable, and also the decided establishment of all those distinctions which serve to certify character and standing among ourselves, and instruct the public judgment in deciding upon professional pretensions.

These things, and all which they include, we would press upon your consideration and commend to your hearty observance. The profession, to adopt the battle orders of Lord Nelson, “expects every man to do his duty.” To you is assigned the post of honor, and we will not allow ourselves to doubt your worthiness of the trust, or your fidelity and efficiency in performing it.

There is a moral chivalry, nobler in tone, pitch and purpose, because more beneficent, than that of arms. Are you baptized with its spirit, capable of its service, devoted to its achievements? Then you will exert its energies, and secure and enjoy its victories.

I began by bidding you welcome to your professional honors. I close by committing you to the divine care in your public duties and personal destiny.—FAREWELL.

THE PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGERY
GRADUATES
OF THE
PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGERY,
FOR THE SESSION OF 1853-54.

NAME.	STATE.	SUBJECT OF THESIS.
1. Horton Bailey,	Pennsylvania,	Preserving the Teeth.
2. William Calvert,	do.	Dental Caries.
3. Firman Coar,	do.	Neuralgia Facia.
4. Alexander G. Coffin,	Massachusetts,	Caries and Treatment.
5. E. H. Cogburn,	Mississippi,	Filling Teeth.
6. Benjamin Cohen,	Pennsylvania,	Saliva and Salivary Calculus.
7. Samuel W. Frazer,	do.	On Arsenic.
8. William Gorges,	do.	Pivot Teeth.
9. Eri W. Haines,	Delaware,	Mechanical Dentistry.
10. W. Storer How,	Maine,	Mutations of the Inferior Maxillary Bone.
11. Louis Jack,	Pennsylvania,	} Remote Causes of Predisposition to Dental Caries.
12. Bernard J. Laughlin,	do.	
13. C. Newlin Pierce,	do.	Treatment of Dental Pulp.
14. Isaiah Price,	do.	Temporary Teeth.
15. David Roberts,	do.	Fracture of the Inferior Maxillary.
16. John M. Rothrock,	N. Carolina,	Periostitis.
17. John R. Rubencame,	Pennsylvania,	Filling Teeth.
18. Thomas H. Shaw,	Alabama,	} The Preparation of Gold and Silver for Dental Purposes.
19. James Truman,	Pennsylvania,	
		Caries of the Teeth.
		Dental Caries.